

2022 Maine Chapter Annual Report

Maine continues to have a largely abandoned, aging tower inventory. This year, there were no tower losses. At a minimum, we keep track of the inventory on a yearly basis. In that effort, we continue to have a large number of members and friends of the chapter do site visits all over the state.

Despite this, we continued with research and archive collection. In June 2022, our Facebook page was hacked and was eventually was lost. We were unable to engage Facebook technical support to get help, so we decided to create a new page and start over. Given this, we lost a significant number of followers for now, so we are working to grow the page back to the 9,000+ followers. In the 4 months the page has been back up, we are nearing 1750 followers.

We continued to keep the Maine tower inventory up to date as there were changes, new discoveries and updates. The findings are below –

2022 Tower Survey

Data as of 12/31/2022

Summary:

Total Known Tower Sites – 144
Total Towers Still Standing – 55
Total Towers Gone or Removed – 89

Of the 55 Standing Towers:

Standing Steel Only, No Cab – 22
Standing Steel Converted to Observation – 6
Standing Steel and Cab – 26
Standing Wooden Enclosed – 1

Average Condition of the 26 standing towers with Cabs:

Good Condition – 11
Fair Condition – 4
Poor Condition – 5
Bad Condition – 6

Usage

Rentals – 0
Lookouts eligible to be used on a volunteer basis - 2

The full tower summary list can be found on the FFLA Web Site on the Lookout Library page under the Maine section. See link below. We will continue to update these lists as new information is found.

<http://ffla.org/lookouts/me/me.htm>

Membership and Budget

2022 membership – 32

2020 end of year balance - \$904.77

As in past years, no chapter funds were requested from the FFLA accounts. All expenses were covered by the director as a donation to the chapter.

NHLR

12 Total Entries

Research / Archives

We continued research efforts on tower sites, largely remotely. We did no in-person oral histories, though we plan to schedule a few telephone interviews in 2023. Worked with various organizations and individuals to provide history and background data on towers and tower sites. We made no trips this year to the Maine State Library, Maine Forest Service or any other locations to retrieve archival information. A possible trip to the National Archives may occur in the summer for CCC research.

Facebook Presence

As stated earlier in the report, the chapter Facebook page was restarted in September 2022 after being hacked. Despite lower numbers of followers right now, we continue to see the below benefits -

- Connecting with many former watchman, yielding a wealth of info
- Connecting with the families of former watchman, yielding a wealth of info
- Provides a good mechanism for communication and outreach
- Is a good research tool
- Has created more exposure for the chapter
- Provides a mechanism to socialize our online membership

Activities

Squaw Mountain watchman sign

In May, we hung a sign on the watchman's trail up Squaw Mountain (now called Big Moose Mountain) in memory of watchman John Hutchinson. John died in the line of duty on the trail in a jeep accident in 1959.



*In Memory of
John R. Hutchinson*

At this spot on October 13, 1959, Maine Forest Service fire tower watchman John Ralph Hutchinson died in the line of duty. While riding in a forestry jeep, the vehicle slid down this embankment and rolled over twice killing him at the age of 47. John was very proud to serve as fire watchman on this mountain. He was very dedicated to the service, manning the fire tower and living on the mountain seven days a week throughout the fire season's summer months. Maine fire watchmen were known as the "Eyes of the Service," providing a key job in the protection of the forests of Maine.

Rest in Peace John as you watch for smoke from a higher place.

Created by the Forest Fire Lookout Association Maine Chapter 2022

Squaw Mountain Watchman's Camp and Tower

Now that the watchman's camp project is completed, we are in maintenance mode with the camp and tower at the Greenville visitor's center. We visit 3 times a year to maintain the site.

Mount Agamenticus

The tower still stands on the summit without a cab, but a restoration is still desired. The planning is currently on hold until the town can fit it into their priority list for the area.

Ossipee Hill

Our tower steward, Ken Kennedy, continued to open and close the tower in 2022 as well as starting some new timber replacements. More work is planned in 2023. The tower continues to be in ok shape and available for volunteer work.

Mount Hope

The tower continues to be available for volunteers on high fire days.

Other Projects

We continued to perform trail maintenance on **Williams Mountain** and we also did a cleanup around and inside of the watchman's camp.

Other Activities

We did make several tower site visits this past year, though less than previous years. Trips included Mount Kineo, Number 4 mountain, Squaw Mountain, and Williams Mountain.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Cobb
Maine Director